DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 318 540 PS 018 575

TITLE The Education for Parenting Organization.
INSTITUTION Education for Parenting, Philadelphia, PA.
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 13p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Curriculum Development; *Elementary School Curriculum; Elementary Secondary Education; *Individual Development; Parent Child Relationship; *Parenthood Education; Parent Influence; *Parenting Skills; *Secondary School Curriculum; *Units of Study
IDENTIFIERS *Educating for Parenting Program

ABSTRACT

Features of the Education for Parenting program's Learning About Parenting: Learning to Care curriculum, Parts I, II, and III are described in detail. The curriculum aims to sensitize students to the responsibilities of parenting and teach students the information and skills needed for parenting and caregiving. It is expected that students who complete the instruction program will understand the complexities, potentials, and variations in infants and young children, the process of human development, and the vital role of parents and caregivers in promoting the full development of the child. The curriculum is based on the assumptions that caring is an ability that can be learned and that study of the interaction of parents and infants adequately introduces students to most of the essential elements of caring. The curriculum calls for babies and parents to be brought together in the classroom, usually once a month, so that students may observe interaction between parents and their baby. Of the three age-appropriate parts of the curriculum, Part I is for the early elementary grades, Part II is for the later elementary grades, and Part III is for middle through beginning high school. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED318540

PS 018375

THE EDUCATION FOR PARENTING ORGANIZATION

A master teacher, Sara Park Scattergood, believed that parenting skills and caring attitudes could and should be systematically taught to students in school. She was joined by others who helped pioneer the EDUCATION FOR PARENTING program at Germantown Friends School in 1978/79 at both the elementary and the high school level. Harriet Heath, Ph.D., a psychologist with a rich background in teaching parenting, joined the staff in 1982 and, assisted by Sara Scattergood and Sandra Meyer, the Program Director, began to articulate in writing what was being taught and how it might be taught appropriately to students of different ages. Their experience taught them that, while the subject is important for all ages, teaching the program to young children before they are sexually active was the primary area on which to focus their attention.

The program was replicated in other independent schools in the early eighties and in 1983 was placed in the Wistar School of the Philadelphia Public School System. Each year the program has expanded to more public schools. During this time the curriculum, Learning About Parenting: Learning To Care (LAPLTC), Parts I and II, for kindergarten through eighth grade, was written, piloted and revised (an on-going process). In 1989 Part III for middle through high school was written and is now being piloted. A manual adapting the curriculum for ESL classes is now being written.

In order to show the adaptability of the curriculum in different settings, since 1985, LAPLTC has been taught in public

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Bonnie Raines
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

schools in Philadelphia, PA, Freeport and Roosevelt, Long Island, NY, Los Angeles, CA, and Dillingham and Manakotak, AK; in independent schools in metropolitan Philadelphia, PA, Washington, D.C., and Boston, MA, including four additional Friends schools, an all boys school, an all girls school and the Pennsylvania School For The Deaf; and in an after school program of an Hispanic Community Center. The initial training of teachers from four schools in Community School District II in New York City, NY took place at the end of June 1989 and the program is now being implemented there. In the fall of 1989 the program began in the public schools of Chicago, IL and Bensalem, PA .

In 1988/89 the program was implemented in 88 classes in 14 Philadelphia public schools in four districts, reaching approximately 2,170 students in kindergarten through eighth grades. Some of the classes were special education classes. So far, in 1989/90 the program, supported by EDUCATION FOR PARENTING, is being taught in nine schools in four districts. More schools and additional classes expect to start the program in January.

EDUCATION FOR PARENTING researches, develops and markets its program. It provides curriculum, training and consultation. In 1985 it became incorporated as an independent, non profit organization with its own board of directors and Sara Park Scattergood was made its first Executive Director. In April 1986 the organization received its IRS tax exempt ruling. In June 1989 the Board of Directors selected Bonnie Muir Raines, M.Ed., an experienced administrator in early childhood and program development, to be EDUCATION FOR PARENTING's second Executive Director.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The overarching goal of Learning About Parenting: Learning To Care is to sensitize students to the responsibilities of parenting/caring for another and to teach them the information and skills necessary for assuming those roles adequately and with a sense of satisfaction.

In order to achieve this goal, four basic objectives have been identified by the curriculum. The effectiveness of the program is measured in part by predicted outcomes. The four basic objectives, with their predicted outcomes are listed below.

1. Students will gain an understanding of the complexities, potentials, and variations of infants and young children (and humans of all ages). They will become aware of variation between individuals in their patterns and rate of growth (individual rate of development) with the outcome that students will become more accepting of differences.
2. Students will gain an understanding of the developmental process and understand how infants/people develop and change from interacting with others and the environment with the outcome that students will accept as necessary the different ways parents respond to the different personalities of infants and younger siblings.
3. Students will gain an understanding of the vital role of parents/caregivers in the fullest development of the child. They will learn that parents/caregivers: a) relate in the deepest form of attachment; b) involve the child in interesting

and expanding activities; c) are available to interpret the world; and d) protect the child from physical and emotional danger. The predicted outcome is that students will come to realize that, if babies are to trust and thrive, they must feel loved and cared for.

4. Students will achieve competence in caring skills. They will learn to plan for interaction with infants or children younger than themselves. They will learn to plan experiences that are age-appropriate and interesting. They will learn to observe objectively and to think about what others need. As a result the students will be more caring of family members and peers.

Evidence of outcomes is found in students' writings, comments in class, how students relate to each other and even comments made at home and reported by parents and other adults. Three additional important outcomes can be predicted:

1. Students will have a more realistic understanding of parenting, and be more cautious about becoming parents;
2. Acquiring knowledge of and skills in parenting will reduce child abuse; and
3. Students of both sexes will learn to value the importance of the father's role. It is particularly important that boys come to recognize that fathers have as much responsibility as mothers to raise the children they create.

CURRICULUM

The EDUCATION FOR PARENTING program stimulates and immediately involves students in its subject matter. Its written curriculum, Learning About Parenting: Learning To Care, is age appropriate, designed so that students in the classroom, kindergarten through early high school, can learn about and experience some of the pleasures, hardships and responsibilities associated with caring for someone, especially an infant or toddler. Using a scientific laboratory approach, it brings babies and parents into the classroom, usually once a month, for students to observe the interaction between parent and baby. The curriculum emphasizes that the parenting process is a caring process, involving planning, doing, and reflecting, and shows to students the parents' role in facilitating the baby's development. It includes ways for students to practice caring, along with brainstorming and decision-making. Teaching methods used are both academic (written curriculum) and experiential (live parent/infant visit). The curriculum is also designed to help teachers reach some of their academic objectives, as the children are so fascinated that they become motivated to use their academic skills to report their experiences and understand better their observations.

Another section of the curriculum that is especially appealing to teachers shows students ways to interact with children younger than themselves. These activities are called "partnering". Partnering can also be implemented with older people.

Special Education teachers have found the curriculum useful in helping their students talk about feelings. English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers have found that the curriculum helps in developing language skills and crossing cultural barriers.

The philosophy and theory upon which the curriculum is based rests on three assumptions about the caring process. The first assumption is that caring is an ability that can be learned. It can be learned by being modeled, by being experienced, and by having the opportunity to master specific information and skills. The degree of ability to care is related to the level of understanding of the learner.

The second assumption is that the ability to care involves having certain attitudes, information and skills. The attitudes include wanting to be involved and feeling that one can make a difference in a situation or relationship. The information needed by the caring person would be about the person being cared for, requiring students to learn to understand the developmental potential of another person. The skills include the ability to plan for the contact and the ability to observe the other's reactions, the ability to communicate, etc.

The third assumption is that, since the interaction of parents and infants is based on such intense and ongoing caring, studying it introduces students to most of the essential elements of caring.

An analysis of research and observations of parents provided a list of the attitudes, information and skills people use when parenting. Experimenting in schools gave the curriculum writers an opportunity to identify at what time and to what extent the various

components of parenting could be taught and what were the most effective methods of teaching it to young students.

The basic method of instruction is the monthly parent/infant visit. Students plan for each of these visits, thereby learning that they can make a difference in the pleasantness of the visit and how the infant responds when visiting them. Infants are intrinsically interesting and, therefore, the visit is a powerful teaching tool. Students become involved in the infant which quickly expands their interest in discovering what the parent does to facilitate development. Students use brainstorming to determine different ways of handling situations and to consider the consequences for infants if their needs are not met. By taking responsibility for parent/infant visits in the classroom and by observing the behavior of those parents and infants and their interaction, students become involved and learn information and skills that are an integral part of the caring process.

Learning About Parenting: Learning To Care is divided into three parts, Part I for the early elementary grades, Part II for the later elementary grades and Part III for middle through beginning high school. EDUCATION FOR PARENTING is in the process of developing a special curriculum for ESL classes.

PART I

The four units which make up Part I are an introduction to human development and are divided according to the age of the visiting infant. The units emphasize the role of parents in the growth of the infant or young child. The attitudes, information and skills used in parenting are important social skills used when

relating and caring for any other living being. The students will begin to understand the importance of how the parents prepare for the birth psychologically and, particularly, how important the care is that the mother takes of her body. They will learn something about the abilities of newborns and the parental role in their development and will have a chance to practice the attitudes and skills they are learning about.

PART II

The four units of Part II, also divided according to the age, give the older elementary student a basic understanding of the development of the child, the role of the parent in that development, and of the attitudes, information and skills needed in undertaking the role successfully. The units in Part II are more complex for the older student and include extra content lessons.

PART III

Part III, EXPLORING HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: INFANTS/YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS, has 24 sessions and is designed for the middle to high school grades. It engages the student on a more theoretical, conceptual level than do Parts I and II which are designed for the younger student. Its objectives are: to follow the development of young children from before birth to three years of age; to analyze the role of the parent in the development of the child; to consider how having a child affects the parent; to recognize that responsible parenting requires a long-term commitment of time, the willingness to be psychologically available to the child, a reasonably secure financial base, and knowing how to use effectively their knowledge of human development; and to

learn skills of parenting/caring by being able to make detailed observations, plan effectively for a young child, implement plans, and relate effectively and caringly with a young child.

Accompanying each unit of Parts I, II, and III is a student's Guided Journal in which children record their observations and write their reflections on the parent/infant visit. In these journals, space is provided for writing about interviews with their own parents or other relatives, and for creative writing. As part of the process of the parent/infant visit each class records on a large chart the students' observations of the baby's progress and the parents' actions as facilitators of growth. At the close of the year, each student takes home his/her own journal as a record. Certain pages of these journals are first copied by EDUCATION FOR PARENTING for evaluation purposes.

HANDBOOK

Accompanying the curriculum units is the teacher's Handbook. The Handbook provides the teacher with a basic introduction to the curriculum, its goals, theoretical assumptions, and suggestions for how to teach it.

THE CURRICULUM

PART I GETTING TO KNOW INFANTS AND THEIR PARENTS
(for students Kindergarten through Third Grade)

The Getting to Know curriculum gives the early elementary student a breif introduction to the attitudes, information and skills that are related to parenting/caring.

The content of these units can le adapted to fit the interests and learning abilities of students Kindergarten through Third grade. Units 3 and 4 are more meaningful if the students have had Unit 2.

Introduction

Unit 1 Getting to Know: Newborns and Their Parents

A pregnant couple (or woman) is invited into the classroom. Students ask questions and observe changes. The couple or mother return following birth to introduce their newborn whose development is then followed.

Time: 45 minutes a month for six to ten months.

Unit 2 Getting to Know: Infants and Their Parents

An infant and parent are invited into the classroom once a month. Students observe the changes in the infant. They ask what the parent has to do to care for the baby. They record what they learn.

Time: 45 minutes a month for six to ten months.

Unit 3 Getting to Know: Toddlers and Their Parents

A toddler and parent are invited into the classroom. Students observe the abilities and interests of the child. They ask what the parent has to do to care for the child. They record what they learn.

Time: 45 minutes a month for three to four months.

Unit 4 Getting to Know: How to Care for Children Who Are Younger

Teacher helps students plan for children who are younger than they are. Students then carry out their plans thus practicing skills.

Time: 45 minutes every week for four to six weeks.

Copyright Heath, Scattergood and Meyer, 1983 8/88

THE CURRICULUM cont.

PART II LEARNING ABOUT INFANTS AND THEIR PARENTS
(A Survey - For Students in Fourth through Eighth Grades)

This Learning About curriculum gives the older elementary student a basic understanding of the role of the parent in the development of the child and of the attitudes, information and skills used in undertaking that role.

The units are written to be presented sequentially: Unit I in Fourth Grade; Unit 2 in Fifth Grade and Units 3 and 4 in Sixth Grade. However, the material is challenging to students in seventh and eighth grades who have not had the content earlier. Units 1 and 2 are viewed as necessary if students are to grasp well the underlying attitudes being conveyed.

Note: Unit 2 lays a foundation for Units 3 and 4 and should always be taught before them. During Unit 1 a newborn is brought into the classroom. Infants look very appealing to young adolescents. We recommend this unit not be taught above Fourth Grade without counterbalancing it with information about the responsibilities of parenting and how beautiful babies develop into curious toddlers.

Introduction

Unit 1 Learning About Newborns and Their Parents
A pregnant couple/mother is followed through the latter part of the pregnancy and into the first months with a newborn. Additional discussions center on the costs of having and caring for a baby.
Time: Two hours a month for ten months.

Unit 2 Learning About Infants and Their Parents
A parent with an infant who is six-to-seven months old in the fall is followed throughout the year. Additional discussions focus on how human development is fostered.
Time: Two hours a month for ten months.

Unit 3 Learning About Toddlers and Their Parents
A parent with toddler visits the class at the beginning of the school year. Additional discussions center on how to encourage infants to explore and yet keep them safe.
Time: Two hours a month for three months.

Unit 4 Learning About Caring for Infants
Students have an opportunity to interact with infants using their knowledge of human development to plan for them in ways which facilitate their growth.
Time: One hour a week for six weeks.

Copyright Heath, Scattergood and Meyer, 1983 8/88

PART III EXPLORING HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: INFANTS/YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS CHANGING (For Upper-Level Students)

The Third Part of the Learning About curriculum, a semester length course, gives the upper level student an indepth understanding of human development, the role of parents in that process and something of how being a parent affects the adult. Students learn the attitudes, information and skills that parenting requires. They have more opportunities than in Parts I and II to care for and work with infants and young children.

In Exploring Human Development students obtain an overview of development by having parents bring their infants of different ages to the classroom starting with a pregnant couple, followed by parents with a newborn, then in succeeding weeks parents with a four-month-old, an eight-month-old, a twelve-, a sixteen-, a twenty-four- and a thirty-six-month old. Students observe and chart the infant's behavior, the parent/infant interaction and how the parent supports the infant's development.

With each visit students use the parenting process of planning, doing and reflecting with each visit. First they predict what they think the infant will be able to do; then they makes plans for the visit based on their predictions. During the visit they carry out their plans. Following the visit they reflect upon the effectiveness of the plans.

Between visits, using visual aides, classroom discussions, and research techniques, students learn more about the developmental process, including:

- How parents must protect their unborn infants and plan for them.
- The capacities of newborns and how parents can facilitate their development.
- How infants become more competent as their capacities become more integrated and complex, a process that occurs as parents interact with and provide toys for their babies.
- Needs all people have, and the different ways people have of satisfying them.
- Methods for encouraging infants to explore and to learn about their world.
- How people, adults and children, differ including not only developmental level but temperament patterns, physical characteristics and learning styles.
- The importance of play to infants, children and adults.
- The value of toys and what makes a good one.
- How being a parent affects the adult.

Copyright Heath, Scattergood and Meyer, 1983 8/88